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CAMRA

Cambridge & District Branch Newsletter Issue 411 February 2025

Cheers and Farewell Tony Millns: CAMRA owes you so much

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Eat - Drink - Sleep

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Pub News

We begin Ale 411 with an exciting development in local transport. The initiative is called Tiger On Demand. It is a flexible on demand bus service which allows passengers to book a journey to and from virtual bus stops within one of five designated travel zones, three of which are in our branch area, at a cost of £2.00 per journey (Concessionary bus pass holders travel free). The area covered by the service includes West Huntingdonshire, Fenland, East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire, including Cambourne, but not central Cambridge. Bookings are made through an app or online : **www.tigerondemand.co.uk** . Early days, of course, but we believe that it will create an opportunity for pub lovers to visit the pubs in some of our more isolated villages. The whole thing has been subsidised by the Cambridge and Peterborough local authority. Cheers to them!

Catching up with some of the pubs mentioned in Pub News ALE 410: Another planning application has been issued claiming that the **Travellers Rest**, Huntingdon Road, Cambridge has been a restaurant for over 10 years and should be recognised as such. Cambridge CAMRA makes a point of visiting and having a drink in every pub in our branch area and we can tell you that it was a lot less than ten years ago that we were served a beer at the bar. There was no expectation at that time that we would order food. If like us you have used the Travellers Rest purely as a pub at any time in the last 10 years please let us know by emailing **pubs@cambridge-camra.org.uk**

Calverly's Brewery, Hooper Street Cambridge, has been granted permission to make permanent their current temporary outside drinking arrangement. The outside area must close at 9pm Tuesday to Thursday, and at 10pm on Friday and Saturday.

Branch

Don't forget that all Branch members are very welcome to attend the monthly business meetings, as well as our socials.

Tue 11 February Open Branch Meeting, Portland Arms
Thu 20 February Thursday Throng Social, Geldart
Tue 25 February Annual General Meeting, Alexandra Arms, Cambridge
Wed 12 March Strolling Social in London
For a fuller list of local events please check **cambridge-camra.org.uk/events/**.

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Pub News continued

The Individual Pub Company has applied for permission to extend the **Rose and Crown**, Impington. The plan is to demolish and then extend upon a little used outhouse.

It also includes the provision of a children's soft play area, and a planted garden.

Locals at the **Bell**, Bottisham have celebrated the arrival of new licensees in some style. Over 400 people are said to have attended the December opening. Now serving breakfasts, the former dining area has been converted into a comfortable seating area.

A warm welcome to Emily Hadfield, who became manager of the **Greyhound**, Sawston on December 13th 2024.

Farewell to Dean Hall. January 4th saw him celebrate 10 years in charge of the **Railway Vue**, Impington. His tenancy agreement with Punch Taverns having come to an end, he has decided to move on from running a pub, though in a interview with the Histon newsletter Hi Hub he said that he will remain living in the area. The kitchen of the Railway Vue is currently closed for refurbishment and is scheduled to re – open in February.

Histon Village Society has released an updated version of their Pub History collection. Entitled Cheers!, it is a comprehensive record of past and present Histon and Impington pubs. In my opinion, it is a good read! Priced at £12.00 it is available on the Society website: **histonandimpingtonvillagesociety.com/books-and-booklets**

Pubs advertised on the Everard Cole site include the leasehold of the **King William IV**, Heydon, (Offers). A Leaseholder is also sought for the **Willow Tree**, Bourn (£55,000 pa). The 17th Century **Swan House**, Fowlmere is offered Freehold (£400,000). The **Plough**, Shepreth is offered for rent (£35,000 pa) and the rent for the **Chestnut Tree**, West Wratting is listed at £20,000 pa. The **Duke of Wellington**, Willingham is "under offer".

Reading Little Shelford Online, we noticed that the **Navigator**, which has been closed since March last year, will re-open after refurbishment as soon as a suitable manager can be appointed. It is to be renamed **Side Quest**.

It is not often that we celebrate the opening of a new brewery in our area, so it is great to learn that Pixie Brewery @pixiebrewing made it's first brew for **Northstowe Tap** in December last year. Based in Barrington, it is a nano brewery specialising in Craft Ales.

Steve and Hayley Pelegrini, who currently run Cambridge pubs the **Portland Arms**, **Alexandra Arms** and **Castle Inn**, will also be taking on the **Duchess of Cambridge** in Trumpington. We understand that the pub may revert to its previous name **Hudson's Ale House**.

A new licensee too in the **Six Bells**, Fulbourn. Tony took charge at the beginning of November 2024.

And finally, we'd like to record the ongoing success of the villagers working to save the **Ickleton Lion**. Calling themselves the Lionhearted, the action group management team is now looking towards the re-opening of the pub as a community venue.

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Cheers and Farewell Tony Millns: CAMRA owes you so much

Early January I received an email from Tony Millns. He had some Cambridge CAMRA memorabilia; tankards, posters, glasses he would like to move on. Would I like them?

Yes, I said, shall we meet up for a beer?

“Yes please. Could you pick me up and we’ll go to the Swan.”

Tony lived in Elsworth. He and his wife Jill frequently visited the White Swan in Conington, and it was very fitting, though I didn’t know at the time, that he and I should go there for what turned out to be his last beer.

“I have cancer”, he said “and it’s aggressive. I have a few weeks to live.”

I was speechless, but it didn’t seem to matter. Tony asked all the questions. How are things in Cambridge Branch? Could I help with a database project he was hoping to complete?

“Cambridge Branch is doing fine.”

Unfortunately, we didn’t have time to work on the database.

But what struck me was, even though he knew he was very ill, Tony was still looking to the future. His last weeks were spent tidying everything up to make life more convenient for those he was leaving behind.

Tony had a soft spot for Cambridge. Born in Doncaster, he gained experience of volunteering with CAMRA North East region, before moving to Cambridge, where he helped to shape the Cambridge branch. He was a principal participant in organising the first ever CAMRA Beer Festival held in Cambridge Corn Exchange, which ran out of beer with two days to spare, though more stock was hastily sourced!

In 1982, as National Chairman, he was able to oversee the establishment of CAMRA events throughout the UK; perhaps most importantly, The Great British Beer Festival, which became the flagship event of the Campaign. He stood down in 1985 but remained a key activist.

He chaired several key committees and looked after CAMRA’s main publications, What’s Brewing and The Good Beer Guide.

CAMRA is very keen to acknowledge the role that is played by volunteers. Put simply, without volunteers there would be no Campaign. Some volunteers go that extra mile.

Tony Millns was one of those.

Copies of the posters he presented to me as we had his final beer (Adnams Southwold bitter, served straight from the cask) are hanging in the bar of the Kingston Arms, Cambridge.

Occasionally I raise a glass to them and imagine that Tony, now seated in the great pub in the sky where “Last Orders” is never called. Is raising a glass in return.

Will Smith

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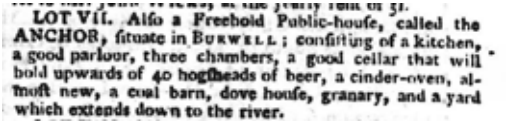
The Anchor Thai, Burwell

The Anchor (63 North Street, Burwell, CB25 0BA) is a listed building believed to date from the 17th century and is constructed of clunch & painted brick with pitched roofing covered with modern interlocking tiles.

The approval of persons considered fit to keep alehouse and taverns was vested with Justices of the Peace from 1552 and required the publican to apply for a licence usually at quarter or petty sessions of the courts. Innkeepers were included from 1617 followed by the Alehouse Act 1828, which established a general annual licensing meeting to be held in every city, town, division, county for the purposes of granting licences to inns, alehouses and victualling (i.e. provision of food) houses to sell excisable liquors to be drunk on the premises. Two years later the Beerhouse Act enabled any rate-payer to brew and sell beer on payment of a licence costing two guineas (£2.10 in decimal currency, not adjusted for inflation). The intention was to increase competition between brewers; lowering prices and encouraging people to drink beer instead of strong spirits. The surviving records for Cambridgeshire 1764 – 1828 are kept in the Cambridgeshire Archives at Ely (also available online at Find My Past).

The first recorded licensed victualler at The Anchor was Amos Bone from 1764 -1766. He was followed by Thomas Eaton for twelve years & John Cracknell for about eighteen months. John Gittas became the landlord for ten years (1782-1792) and it is thought he moved on to The Fox in the village. He was followed by Joseph Manning (1793-1815) who was at the Anchor for twelve years & his wife Elizabeth for a further two years. Joseph Finch four years, Johnathan Green six or more years and Robert & Mary Durrant for two years were the following licensed victuallers.

Originally in most pubs, beer was brewed on the premises but later as various breweries were built, pubs were bought up & often "tied "to a specific brewery. It seems likely that one of the first brewers to supply The Anchor was the brewery at Newmarket owned by Robert Bones snr. A notice in the Cambridge Chronicle 7 March 1780 stated that Robert (a common brewer) had died and his son Robert Bones jnr was carrying on with his father's business. Which he did until 1789 when an auction notice appeared in The Bury & Norwich Post dated 7 January 1789 offering for sale from Mr Robert Bones estate, a five bedroom house, a brewhouse & store house able to store over 1000 hogshead casks, a maltings, barn & farm. Also the following public houses, White Horse, Wheatsheaf, Waggon & Horses & The Corydon all Newmarket, The Anchor Burwell, The White Horse Exning & The Plough Ashley.


LOT VII. Alſo a Freehold Public-houſe, called the ANCHOR, ſituate in BURWELL; conſiſting of a kitchen, a good parlour, three chambers, a good cellar that will hold upwards of 40 hogſheads of beer, a cinder-oven, almoſt new, a coal barn, dove houſe, granary, and a yard which extends down to the river.

It seems possible that Stephen Piper snr, a brewer may have later taken on the Anchor & The Plough. He would have only been 20/21 at time of Robert Bones auction so possibly too young to buy at that time but he may have bought them when he took over from J Bryant (Brewer & Liquor Merchant) in 1812. He is down as surety for the Anchor Burwell & Plough Ashley in 1817 & 1816. Stephen owned the brewery in Albion Street & in July 1833 Charles Phillips bought the brewery from Stephen, who died nine months later, on 7th April 1834. Charles Phillips later sold this brewery in June 1865, at which time it was purchased by the Moody Brothers, to eventually become the King's Head Brewery.

The licensing records of 1875 show the pub was owned by Crown Brewery, Newmarket Road, Cambridge which was owned by William Wilkes Featherstonehaugh. He died in 1880 & the brewery & pubs were sold on. In the 1890's The Spring Brewery in Cambridge & The Anchor were owned by James McAllan Preston of Cambridge. He sold on the brewery & pubs to E Lacon of Gt Yarmouth in 1898. It is believed the pub was acquired by Greene King & Sons Ltd around 1901.

Like several of the other pubs in Burwell the Anchor was often used for property auctions and sometimes inquests were held in The Anchor. Often these were for children & adults drowning

in the nearby lode, but one was for murder in 1899. Robert Jennings bludgeoned his wife's head with a spade & drowned her & and attempted to murder his 13 year old daughter. He was tried in 1900 & found guilty (but insane) and ordered to be kept at Her Majesty's Pleasure. As far as I can see the last inquest was held in 1934 for a boy aged 4, who drowned.

Someone that did not get an inquest was the disappearance of police constable Richard Peak in 1855. Richard Peak was from Caxton and had joined the newly formed Cambridgeshire Constabulary police in 1851 aged about 20. He was stationed at Burwell and given responsibility for the village of Wicken.

On 17th August 1855 Peak's job was to police a crop auction at the Lion public house in Wicken. During the evening Peak was seen getting drinks at the bar out of uniform. He also broke up a small disturbance. The landlord, William Cranwell saw Peak for the last time at 3.15 a.m. Peak said to the landlord. "Good morning; I've got an hour and a half's walk, and then I will go to bed."Peak failed to make a meeting with a colleague in Burwell at 4 a.m. that morning. A day or so later other police were called in to search routes along the waterways between Wicken and Burwell but he was never found.

In her book Cambridgeshire Murders, Alison Bruce reports that a strange smell was reported at the time coming from the Burwell brickworks and in the 1880s a skeleton was recovered from a pond in Wicken with severe damage to the skull. Oddy the remains were put back in the pond & lost. During renovation work at the Anchor during the 1960's a skeleton was discovered & the skull displayed over the bar & rumoured to be PC Peak. Apparently it was dropped & smashed at some point! She concludes that as The Anchor is located on the Wicken side of Burwell it seems the most likely resting place for the missing constable.

Another regular feature of the pub was providing of a meal & refreshments for local organisations e.g. The Ancient Shepherds society in 1850.

The family who served as landlords for the longest periods were the Davey's, Henry was a wheelwright as well as a publican (1841 -1869) his son Henry jnr was a carpenter & publican (1869 – 1897) & Sophia (Henry jnr's wife & widow) (1897 -1907) a total of sixty six years in one family.

I thought this might be some sort of record until I checked other pubs in the village and found the following: The Rose (Bridgeman family) 61 Years; The Queens Arms (The Turner Family) 62 Years; The Bushel (Turner family) 68 years; The White Horse (Carter family) 101 years.

Before World War I and in the twenties the turnover of landlords was fairly swift with five in seventeen years (Manning, Cullum, Richards, Aldritt & Ridgeon) until Harry Wright took over in 1924, he had been a window cleaner in Bury St Edmunds & never held a licence before. He was followed by his son Harry S Wright junior in 1935. I think Harry junior sailed quite close to the wind about serving drinks after time & was finally prosecuted in Oct 1939 – he left the pub in 1940. His successors were James Pavey, followed by John Radwell.

In the interwar period around 1930-31 the Burwell & District Darts League was formed & The Anchor had a team and although there were changes to the team & leagues the pub continued to have teams through to the early 21st century. Other team games of cribbage, dominoes, bar billiards and pétanque were also played over time. In the late 1920's a Mr Dyson offered motorboat launch trips from the Anchor Inn on Thursdays to Ely & Sundays to Clayhithe.

In 1943 Herbert Bowman & his wife Ellen became "mine hosts" for a good run through to 1958. Herbert had previously worked at The White Swan, Exning & on Pembroke Farm Burwell before taking the tenancy of The Anchor. Alfred Gregson was at the helm for the next five years, followed by Eric Faircliffe who introduced Friday night as a music night with George Challice & electric organ for two years until 1965. Gordon Church held the fort temporarily until April 1965 when James (Jimmy) Redpath took over. He had moved his family down from Scotland in the early 1960s to become steward at the Newmarket Golf Club before moving on to the Anchor. It was during the Redpath's time the skeletons bones were found. They were estimated to have been of a middle-aged man, 5 feet 6 inches tall with

The Anchor Thai, Burwell (continued)

arthritis, so probably not Constable Peak.

Mr Redpath left in 1968 and was followed by William Bolton for the next five years. Ronald Jefferson Gibbs (Jeff) & his wife Thelma then became the landlord & landlady & both seemed to enjoy the darts playing with Jeff even supplying a minibus for transporting the darts teams. They left in 1976 & were superseded by Phil & Brenda Starmer who moved from Keddington to try their first time running a pub, Phil had previously worked as a bricklayer.

The Starmer's stayed for eighteen years and in that time did a lot to make a go of the pub & for it to be a good village pub. In 1979 they built a patio, beer garden & children's play area & moorings for boats. They introduced & sponsored a fishing match for juniors and raft races. They continued supporting & playing local darts & in the late 1970s the Anchor won the Burwell summer league & KO Cup doing the double at least twice.

A personal memory I have is one Monday morning in Dec 1981 when snow lay on the ground, much of it blown off the fields by strong winds on Sunday night a neighbour and I tried to drive to work in Cambridge. We found all roads out of Burwell were blocked by snow drifts & after several fruitless hours trying each road we finally gave up & returned home. We then walked up to the Anchor to enjoy a convivial lunchtime with a good fire in the inglenook, good beer & tales of woe exchanged with the many waifs & strays that appeared, marooned by the snow drifts.

Thomas Murray ("or the mad Irishman") appeared on the scene as the new landlord in the autumn of 1994 having previously been a baker in Dublin. Things certainly went with a bang for the next seven years. He introduced bonfire night displays & hog roasts, a weekly pub quiz (and also a "play you cards right" game based on the TV show of the same name). Tom & his wife Eileen employed a series of au pairs to help look after their twin daughters. Tragically one of the au pairs, Eva Muchova, a 19 year old from Slovakia was drowned on a night out at the No Hurry, Upware after her car went into the water at the Upware marina. The regulars at the quiz night voted to give the kitty from the "play your cards right" and a collection in the pub to Eva's parents.

St Patrick day celebrations were a regular yearly feature & Tom claimed to serve the best pint of Guiness outside of Dublin. He introduced lunch time jazz sessions, formed the front part of the pub into a restaurant area & the lower section into the James Dean bar. He encouraged the Burwell Anchor Ramblers to start up, they would meet every Sunday, usually at the Anchor & walk a few miles through the surrounding countryside & finish up at The Anchor for a beer at lunchtime. The BAR is still going today but not always finishing at the Anchor. Following some marital discord Eileen & the twins moved back to Ireland, and Tom then left the pub in 2002 & is believed to have taken over the Cricketers in Melbourne Place, Cambridge after that.

Alexi Bronsky, believed to be Russian, then ran the pub for a few months. The next couple to weigh in at the Anchor in 2003 was the chef Phil Vincent and his wife Tessa who had been the first couple to take on The Dykes End at Reach following its buy out by the community in around 2000. The Vincent's left in 2005 and were followed by Bob & Margaret Gornall for a year or so. The ex Quy estate gamekeeper Davd Roff & his wife Marilyn then took over, before moving on to the Bell at Bottisham.

In 2010 Gaye & Simon Stephens Young became mine hosts until 2015, when Nicki & Rick Turner, of the Five Bells took over the Anchor as well on a short term basis. I am pleased to say Gaye's youngest daughter Maddie is one of the current bar staff at the Anchor & one of the best at pulling a pint of real ale.

After that we had Paul Forden for a year or two trying to turn the Anchor mainly into a restaurant, followed by Jean Mary Myers & chef Ben Crick who accessed some crowd funding, again with a fine dining aspiration, followed by another chef Calvin Holland of the White Pheasant at Fordham. Sadly although the food was very good in most cases, in my humble opinion a pub in a back street in a Cambridgeshire village, with a

small car park, no longer with a riverside setting (Greene King sold of the land for housing) and is no longer a destination venue for fine dining. Whilst the Covid pandemic certainly did not help the last one, it looks like my opinion might be correct.

Now we come to 2022 & a knight in shining armour, well a white beard, called Joe Barron from The Shave Cross Inn, Dorset and then the Thai Street Café & Job's Deli in Newmarket arrived on the scene with his trusted chef Son & assistant manager Ben, He stated his intention was to run a good village pub with a good food offering specialising in Thai food.

Hallelujah! My friends and I think Joe & his team have delivered in spades, the food is good and we have all eaten there and enjoyed it. It is good value for money. The real ale is good, with two changing regularly, cider on draught, other beers, lagers, wines, spirits & soft drinks, cheerful & helpful staff, what's not to like? We even get to play none violent dominoes on some nights.

Keith Barker May 2024

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Midlands Meanderings: Warwick

This meandering was inspired by another CAMRA magazine item, a report in the *Solihull Drinker* of a pub walk around all five of Warwick's 2024 *Good Beer Guide* pubs. I hadn't been to Warwick for several years, and I'd only been to one of the pubs included before, so that sounded like a perfect excursion.

The first pub, handily close to the railway station, is the **Wild Boar**, the taphouse of Slaughterhouse Brewery. (Pro tip: If arriving by train from Birmingham, don't go out through the main exit, save a lengthy detour by slipping out of the exit on the other side of the station.)

This fine old Victorian pub has a fairly traditional, quite spartan bar area at the front, a cosier snug, and a larger function room at the back. But it was to the narrow sun-trap beer garden that I headed to enjoy the first (and second) beer of the day, namely Slaughterhouse Wild Boar, a lovely dark, malty, beer, heavy on my two favourite malts: crystal and chocolate.

The garden itself is more patio than lawn, but greenery is provided by the hops growing along the trellis, which are used in some of the beers.

That was a very fine start to the trip and, as usual, I had great difficulty tearing myself away.

The second pub is a bit of a walk away, heading north past the hospital and an industrial estate before nipping down Lock Lane to the Grand Union Canal. From here a much nicer, though also sadly much shorter walk along the canal brings you to the **Cape of Good Hope.**

This is a lovely old canal-side pub, with two bars: one, on the landward side, is set mostly for dining, the other is more traditionally 'pubby', and there is a narrow beer garden along the side of the canal; this, I can attest, is a lovely spot to sit and relax for a while on a summer's afternoon, sipping a pint or two and watching the occasional boat navigate the locks. The 'pint or two' in question? Hook Norton's Hooky Best Bitter.

Suitably refreshed I began the long walk back into town and the next watering hole, the **Eagle**.

Described as a 'hidden gem', this most micro of micro pubs (capacity: 37) took a bit of finding as it is located in an old cellar

just off the square. 'Quirky' is an overused word, but in the case of this pub I think it fits nicely. The toilet is a must-see, even you don't need to use it.

Despite the small size, they seem to get through the beer, chalking up over 300 different cask and 200 different craft beers in their first two years of operation. Alas (for me), the range when I popped in was all on the pale and hoppy side, so I just had a quick half of something from Salopian Brewery. Nothing wrong with the beer at all, just not to my taste.

Although I didn't stay long here, I had a good chat about dark beer with the owner of the next pub, who happened to be propping up the bar next to me, and he suggested which beers I should be drinking when I got there.

So, to the **Old Post Office**, another micro pub, now approaching its tenth anniversary.

This was the only pub on the tour that I'd been to before, back in 2015, and I was pleased to find that it hadn't changed character at all. The walls of the front room are covered in all sorts of eclectic stuff (see photo), and the steps up to the bar are especially steep. The rear is more traditionally pubby.

The beer that I had been recommended, Phipps X, was spot on: a really lovely best bitter. And having not spent long in the Eagle, I had time to savour more than one…

The final pub of the day, the **Old Fourpenny Shop**, was conveniently just round the corner.

This very imposing frontage leads to a similarly large interior. The distinct aroma of fish that greeted me when I stepped inside suggested that food is a big thing here, and indeed much of the interior is set for dining. For those who prefer not to have their nostrils so assaulted while they're trying to enjoy a beer, there is a very fine and sizeable garden at the back, though sadly the grass is fake.

So outside I went, to enjoy another couple of pints of Hooky Best, watch the swifts being all aerobatic in the sky above, and reflect on a lovely day out and how, with a bit of discipline and less dawdling, I can actually get through an entire hit list of five pubs after all.

At last, time to leave. The first pub was quite close to the station, the last was about as far away as you can get and still be in Warwick, but Warwick is a lovely place to walk through so that's no great hardship. And there are several other pubs on the way for the footsore/thirsty if required.

Steve Linley

Apples and Pears

Coton Orchard – The fight is on to save the orchard

Can you help preserve Coton's local orchard? We need your help – please sign the petition.

Apples from Coton's orchard have been used to produce Blue Barrel Cider's Cuckoo's Return, along with a sparkling cider currently in production.

GCP (Greater Cambridge Partnership) want to drive a bus right through the middle of the orchard – not just a bus - a busway! There are alternative routes to the one that will bisect the orchard, but this is their preferred option. This can't be right!

Since the 1950's almost 90% of the country's orchards have been lost to either neglect, development or intensive modern fruit production. Anna's orchard, Coton Orchard, has been in her family since the mid 1990's, bought as a sideline by her father, Albert, to complement his work as an antique restorer and watchmaker.

This wasn't purchased solely as a money-making venture. Albert was evacuated to Cambridgeshire during the second world war and had fond childhood memories of playing in the local orchards. He saw Coton as an opportunity to preserve a small piece of that history and used to harvest the fruit to press and make juices to sell to local outlets.

Anna, who has now taken over the management of the orchard, is committed to its preservation Should the GCP initiative go ahead it's likely that her efforts will fail. Coton's apple trees are on the brink of being removed not through financial temptation but by force.

A new busway linking Cambourne to Cambridge was first proposed in 2014, as part of a government-backed scheme to improve public transport to the city.

Various routes were proposed for a new road. The one that was eventually picked cuts directly through the heart of the orchard. The official estimate is that around five hundred trees will have to be cut down to make way for the project.

Anna believes that the true loss may be more than twice that.

The developers behind the proposal, the Greater Cambridge Partnership, say there are no reasonable alternatives – that the city needs better public transport to tackle the climate emergency, and that, by slicing the orchard in two, they avoid harming the nearby ancient woodland. Campaigners are unconvinced, arguing that the developer's goals could be better achieved by extending the existing road.

Despite widespread objections to the proposal, in March 2024 the county council voted in favour of an application for a Transport and Works Act Order. Pending a likely public enquiry, the orchard's hundred-year history could soon be brought to an ignominious end. A recently placed temporary preservation order offers a flimsy short-term respite – but the argument is far from won.

The jewels in the crown of Coton Orchard are its eleven Bramley apple trees, planted when the orchard was first established and now around a century old. Their trunks have hollowed with age, some ringed by bracket fungi, but they still have decades of life. Alongside these giants are hundreds of smaller trees, producing 26 varieties of apples as well as plums and pears.

The Partnerships own environmental impact assessment published in March, admits that Coton Orchard is a hotspot of biodiversity.

It supports more than two hundred invertebrate species, of which 14 are considered nationally scarce, including eight species of beetle, two of bees and four of moths. Bats make regular use of the hedgerows at the orchard boundaries.

For Anna, the battle is personal. While another landowner might have happily taken the cash, she is desperate to save the land that her family has nurtured for so long. Her passion for the wildlife that her orchard supports is self-evident.

"For the last couple of years, we have just let the apples fall. We had this carpet of apples, and this giant flock of birds – it must have been five hundred redwing and another five hundred

fieldfare – descended into the trees for a week and ate the whole lot. It was a bit scary. And these are red-listed birds.

“All these are rare species that, if you plough a bus through, will all be gone.”

Orchards are rare and special places, considered a priority habitat under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan – a designation which means they are promoted but not legally protected.

Busway supporters have claimed that the orchard is not ‘traditional’ due to younger trees being planted – these ‘younger’ trees are several decades old, some almost as old as the original trees.

The loss of the orchard would be a tragedy: for the ancient trees that preside over its unploughed grasses, for the birds that feed upon its apples, for the people who have loved it in the past and who love it now.

But the real tragedy, perhaps, is that England’s orchards have declined so steeply that so much hangs upon this small patch of land – a final relic of a habitat that was once an integral part of England ‘s food production and culture.

“What we are trying to get across to people is that this is really important stuff,” says Anna. “It’s a little orchard, and it doesn’t look like a great deal, but it could be the domino that tips over and causes untold problems somewhere else.”

It is not too late to s sign the petition against the planned Guided Busway route. You can do so via this link: www.change.org/p/save-the-green-corridor-cambourne-to-cambridge-bus-lane-not-busway.

Jerry Ladell

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Paws for thought

It is always lovely to meet people who remember me from years ago. My friend in this first picture is called Kate. We bumped into her when I was taking my male human for a walk around the Cambridge Science Park. The photo was taken

at my very first beer festival 9 years ago when I was 4 months old. Thank you, Kate, for sending it to me. I am sure everyone would agree we both look as lovely now as we did back then.

I don't know about you, but I'll be pleased when winter is over, and we get some warm sunny days. I must say though, I do like a good pub fire. The Green Dragon, Chesterton, has one of the best. Notices over the mantle say that Tolkien used the pub as inspiration for his taverns in The Lord of the Rings, and on the other side of the fire there are notches in the woodwork where Cromwell was supposed to have practised his knife throwing skills.

I have to say I am just happy to warm myself beside it, especially if I am sat on a warm lap.

This is my friend Gemma.

The Green Dragon is a Greene King pub that is allowed to have several guest beers. It is just across the river from Stourbridge Common. I often go there to chase my ball and stare at cows.

There is a nice open fire in the Rose and Crown, Impington. This pub wasn't open when we did a tour of Histon and Impington for ALE 410. It belongs to the Individual Pub Company and sells Milton Brewery beers. My male human insisted that we visit and have a chat with new landlord Steve. He seems to be enjoying the fire as much as I do.

Another day, another pub tour…

My male human and my Uncles Ali and Helge, and me joined a bus tour run by our friends in CAMRA Ely branch. We visited some lovely village pubs. All but one of them welcomed me with open arms. (I won't write about that one). These lovely people are called John and Linda. They look after the White Horse pub in Witcham.

They told me that they have been there for 12 Years. There were lots of smiles on the faces of our companions when they noticed the unusual variety of beers that were on offer. I was pleased that there were some cosy sofas!

The White Horse hosts an annual World Peashooting Championship, and one of the pubs local visitors, Ian Ashmeade, has held the title

The wonderings of a pub going dog

several times.

The next pub on our tour was the Village Inn in Witchford. (I realised quite quickly that Ely is surrounded by witches). Here we meet two lovely young humans, Saffi aged 4 and Tallulah aged 2. Their mum, Carolyn gave us permission to take and print this photo. The Village Inn has only one real ale. It was, my human said, a very good Timothy Taylor, Boltmaker.

There were eight pubs on this trip. We also visited pubs in Mepal, Wicken, and the Griffin, in Isleham.

Unfortunately, we didn't manage to get photos for these.

We did get a nice picture of me with Charlotte, in the Tharp Arms.

Here is Abbie, in the Rising Sun, Isleham.

Returning to Ely we visited The Cutter Inn and took this photo of me with more friends. My male human did write down their names but there is something about minibus travel that befuddles his mind (or so he says) and he mislaid his notes. Thankfully, I remembered: Mya, Annabel, Carla and Molly. It was lovely to meet you all.

You'll notice that I am not in this next photo. That's because I wasn't there. It was taken in the Queens Head, Newton on a recent Cambridge CAMRA Pub Tour. Humans, Julia and Adrian had hoped to see me on the tour. Unfortunately, my male human had double booked himself and we weren't able to go. They were so disappointed Uncle Helge took a photo so I'll recognise them should we meet in the pub another time.

Woof for now, Gladys Emmanuelle

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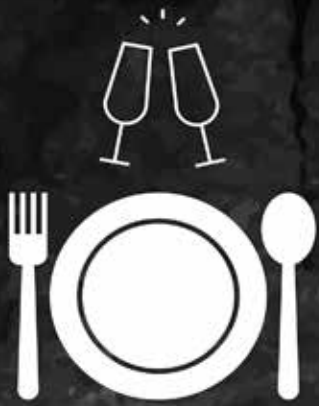

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